

# Critical Thinking as Citizen's Intellectual Skills in Facing Hoax on Social Media

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## **Abstract**

*This research aims to convey the urgency and application of critical thinking as a citizen's intellectual skill in an effort to deal with circulating of the hoax during elections on social media. The method used in this research is literature study method. Collecting data including primary and secondary data comes from relevant literature, such as books, journals, and other related research data. The results showed that the ability to think critically as an intellectual skill is needed by citizens to underlie their actions and attitudes in dealing with political issues on social media. The era of society 5.0 where technological sophistication is increasingly integrated in the lives of citizens who then demanded each individual to be more selective in utilizing developing technological products.. Social media as a product of technological development has become a popular channel to encourage the enthusiasm of citizens to follow the development of existing political information. Social media actually makes it easy for the public to get information related to general elections, but media oftenly misused as a tool of provocation and spreading the hoax by irresponsible parties to bring down the opposing camp. So as good and smart citizenship in the 5.0 society era, Indonesian citizens need to apply critical thinking steps to criticize all information. This study concludes that with good critical thinking skills, citizens will be able to filter the truth of an issue and can take appropriate action so as not to trigger divisions in society.*

Keywords: critical thinking; hoax; social media.

## **Introduction**

Human civilization is currently entering the era of society 5.0, where technological sophistication is increasingly merging into human life both in terms of industry and in

social conditions. In the era of society 5.0, technological developments took place in an extraordinary way and drastic changes appeared in the lives of today's generation. These changes include changes in socializing, ways

of communicating, obtaining information to ways of thinking and acting on the problems at hand (PR, 2020). In this case, the impact of digitalization and networking is also very pronounced. The main characteristic of this condition networking can be seen in the increasingly powerful influence of the internet and digital media in all areas of life. Dealing with a gadget monitor screen all the time becomes a daily life that cannot be separated by young and old alike. Among young people, internet activity is part of their life. Marc Prensky in *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* (Prensky, 2001) calls today's generation the 'born digital' generation. This means that children are now born in the digital era so that their lives will be familiar with digital media or technology. It is not surprising that the intensity of young people in using digital media is very high. The use of the internet and digital technology most often used by them is social media..

Social media provides benefits in people's lives. The existence of social media as a product of digital technology allows all of us to connect with each other even though we are not in the same location. Understanding in simple terms can be interpreted as social media as media used to facilitate human social interaction with each other online. Based on the phenomena in the field, Michael Cross (Cross, 2014) concluded that social media is a term that describes various technologies being used to engage people in collaboration, the exchange of information, and interactivity with Web-based content .

Based on data from *kompas.com*, currently there are 170 million Indonesia people who are being active users of social media (Kompas, 2021). Quoting a statement on *tekno.kompas.com* (Kompas, 2021b), in a Hootsuite report entitled *Digital 2021: The Latest Insights Into The State of Digital*, it was stated that out of 274.9 million people in Indonesia, 170 million of them have used social media. Thus, the penetration rate is approximately 61.8 percent. It is known that there are 5 types of social media that are most widely used in Indonesia based on the latest hootsuite data, namely Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. This shows how popular social media is in today's society..

The emergence of social media initially had an important position to facilitate communication and information gathering. As stated above, through social media, information can be conveyed quickly and extends to all social media users anywhere and anytime. On social media, people can exchange information, get information visually, text and audio, can communicate and also (Nabila et al., 2020). However, in reality, the advantages of social media oftenly to be misused by irresponsible parties. The misuse of the function of social media is increasingly visible, especially during the election period. Irresponsible political sympathizers, or so-called buzzers, take advantage of social media to spread negative content in the form of hoaxes.

*Kominfo.go.id* said that in the last election on 2019, rumors circulated through a tweet uploaded

by Mirah Sumirat via the Twitter account , @m\_mirah, which shocked the public. The content of her tweet is about the landslide victory of presidential candidate number 2, Prabowo-Sandi at 6000 polling stations in TPS Bekasi. However, after clarifying the issue is not true, because based on confirmation by the KPUD of Bekasi City as the official institution for administering the local elections, it is known that the total number of TPS in Bekasi is only 3,030 TPS instead of 6,000 TPS (KOMINFO, 2019). Based on the case, the possibility has the potential to cause conflict between citizens.

As an effort to overcome unexpected conflicts, it is wise that the first thing we can do as citizens is to always think critically in facing all the issues that develop in the life of the nation and state. There are several avenues that can be used to strengthen these critical thinking skills. The first is through Citizenship education. Maria Montessori in Citizenship Education and Critical Thinking (Montessori, 2002) revealed that there are several reasons why this study needs to pay attention to the dimensions of critical thinking. As a participatory citizen, there is a demand for the ability to think well. It is clear that the meaning of this concept is that in all the actions of a citizen, he must first be based on analysis and critical thinking. Another way is to implement steps critical thinking to analyze the truth of a news or issue that is circulating.

Kokom Komariah and Dede Sri Kartini conduct previous research on the use of social media in political communication, concluded that

social media and its content are important instruments in shaping the political behavior patterns of the millennial generation (Komariah & Kartini, 2019). Other research by Budiyono shows that as part of political communication in the use of social media. Social media ethics must be considered, in order to be more polite in taking actions by social media users (Budiyono, 2016). Meanwhile, this research focuses more on anticipatory efforts that can be done in the face of social media as a forum for spreading negative political issues in the form of the hoax through strengthening critical thinking skills.

The research that underlies this research is research conducted by Triana regarding critical thinking skills in the era of Covid-19 pandemic which concluded that one practical effort that is able to ward off hoaxes is by developing critical thinking skills of each individual (Triana, 2020). However, in this study a different phenomenon is highlighted, namely the general election phenomenon and besides that, one of the solutions offered is to apply critical thinking steps to anticipate hoax issues.

Based on the background that has been described, the researcher aims that this research can explain what is the urgency and how to apply the ability to think critically in dealing with the hoax on social media regarding political issues during the election period

## **Method**

This article used the literature study method. Through library

research, researchers take the data from various sources, such as books, articles, or journals related to research. There are 4 main characteristics of literature study. First, the researcher is directly dealing with manuscripts and numerical data, not direct knowledge from the field or eye witnesses, second is ready-to-use, third is generally secondary data, and fourth, the condition of library data is not influenced by space or time (Mestika Zed, 2008).

Literature study is carried out using documents as the main data source, such as manuscripts, books, newspapers, magazines, and others (Sugiarti et al., 2020). Therefore, the data sources in the study consisted of 2 data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources here are books, journals or other literature sources related to research variables. While secondary data sources are books, journals or other literature sources that contain concepts or data that support the research variables.

Data collection techniques using literature study. Data that has been selected, searched, presented, and analyzed. The analysis technique is carried out by focusing and simplifying the data, presenting the data through the process of collecting and compiling information, and verification (drawing conclusions from the information obtained). The instrument in this study is the researcher himself. Researchers are planners, implementers of data collection, analysis, who interpret data, and also report research results.

The choice of literature study in this research is because the

researcher examines the theories and problems in books, articles and research journals. In addition, this research uses literature study to make it easier for researchers to be able to carry out research during the Covid-19 pandemic. Because research using library research activities are limited to library literature materials without the need to conduct direct research into the field

## **Result and Discussion**

### *Urgency of Critical Thinking in Facing Hoax in Elections General*

Elections are one of the phenomena used to realize the essence of democracy in the Indonesian state. Through the general election, each individual can vote to elect people's representatives who are expected to represent the people in carrying out state affairs and making policies that are right for the lives of citizens. Elections are often referred to as democratic parties. By using the word 'party', it can be interpreted that this phenomenon is a big and important thing in the life of the state in society. Elections have a strong legal basis in their implementation because they are guaranteed directly in the Indonesian constitution, namely the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 22 E and the laws governing elections such as Law Number 7 of 2017. Elections are not held all the time, but are held in a period certain. Elections aimed at electing the President and Vice President, members of the DPR, DPD members, and DPRD members

are held on the basis of the LUBerJuRDil principle once every 5 years as described in Article 22 E of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia for the five-year period, the implementation is not the same. This means that if a region X holds an election, it is not certain that in region Y an election will also be held. This occurs because periods for starting elections are not concurrent, so it is adjusted to the five-year period in each region.

Elections have been going on for a long time in Indonesia, so of course there are developments in all aspects of the election, including in terms of political communication. Before the advent of information technology, such as now political communication between communities, or between candidates to the community, was dominated by direct campaigns in the form of speeches or via television. However, when the era is modern and technological sophistication continues to encourage people's lives to be more digitalized, political communication is carried out in a more varied manner, namely through social media. Social media has become a popular channel to encourage the enthusiasm of citizens to follow developments in existing political information. Social media makes it easy for the public to get information related to general elections and makes it easier for candidates to be elected to campaign, but it is not uncommon for this media to be misused as a tool of provocation and to spread a fake news by parties who are not responsible, for bringing down the opposing camp. The holding of the 2019 general election is also

inseparable from fake news or hoaxes. Fake news is news whose contents do not match the real truth (Adami Chazawi & Ardi Ferdian, 2014). This certainly does not reflect democratic values and undermines the credibility and integrity of elections and politicians who are in design. The dangerous is that it creates unrest or uproar in society and can break the unity of the nation. Hoax becomes ammunition to kill the character of political opponents. With the help of social media, the likelihood of the success of the hoax is getting bigger, this is because considering spread of hoaxes the very fast and massive through social media can influence the public in making their political choices (Elcaputera & Dinata, 2019). Hoax affects individual perceptions. Therefore, to overcome it, we must do something that can strengthen individual reasoning to form perceptions that are based on truth. So in relation to citizenship, as a smart and good citizen, it is necessary to implement civic skills, namely in the component of intellectual skills. Citizens' intellectual skills are carried out through the application of critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking or critical thinking is an activity carried out by individuals to be able to make decisions carefully and carefully (Arofah & Nawantara, 2019) while Gregory et al (Bassham et al., 2013) argue that critical thinking is disciplined thinking that is regulated by intellectual standards clear. From the various concepts of critical thinking that have been described, critical thinking can be understood as an individual activity in observing

and making decisions on a situation based on intellectual thinking. So that critical thinking is a person's ability to use critical thinking when dealing with existing problems, both issues, news and phenomena.

Hoax is deliberately created to disturb the public. With the hoax, people will easily be swayed by the possibility of unclear perceptions. With conditions like this, it shows that today's society needs the ability to think critically in itself. If the public has a critical power, then hoax circulating will not be able to cause a problem because the public can first analyze whether the information is true or not.

There are several characteristics that can reflect someone thinking critically, namely being able to think rationally in addressing a problem, being able to make the right decisions in solving problems, being able to analyze, organize, and dig up information based on existing facts, being able to draw conclusions in solving problems and being able to formulate arguments with correct and systematic (Sulistiani & Masrukan, 2016).

#### *Application of Critical Thinking Ability as Citizen Intellectual Skills in Facing Hoax in Elections*

Citizen skills are divided into two forms, namely intellectual skills and participatory skills. (Winarno, 2019) Intellectual skills that are important for a citizen who is knowledgeable, effective, and responsible are called critical thinking skills. Categorization in intellectual skills includes the ability to identify, describe, explain,

analyze, assess, take, and defend the position of an issue (Branson, 1998). Applying critical thinking must be done by every citizen by paying attention to the principles of critical thinking in intellectual skills when obtaining an issue, news or information.

For the detection of the hoax in the media, the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions released several ways, namely:

- a. Consider the news source
- b. Check the author
- c. Check the date
- d. Check your own bias.
- e. Read the full news.
- f. There are supporting sources or not.
- g. Is that a joke?
- h. Ask the experts (Pratama, 2019).

To find out whether the news is a hoax, the researcher proposes to do it with a combination of critical thinking steps when analyzing news on social media, namely:

1. Read thoroughly: Pay attention to all existing news, do not stop reading until the headline
2. Identification of news: Distinguish whether the news is Facts and opinions in a story
3. The Author search: Check who is the author news and their competencies
4. The Source search: Check the authenticity and reliability of news sources
5. Logical analysis: Read carefully then draw conclusions from statements / news
6. Compare news: Compare the news with news on the same topic but obtained from other

sources

## Conclusion

Hoax is news whose content does not match the existing truth. In the era of 5.0 Society, everything has become completely digital and information technology products are increasingly developing, as if they become an inseparable part of human life. The phenomenon of the hoax was created to disturb the public. With the hoax, people will easily be swayed into unclear perceptions. This also contributes to fears of conflict and division between citizens. The condition of the spread of hoaxes in the political communication of citizens, causing divisions in society like that, does not really show the democratic process that this nation hopes for. For that we need a strengthening of citizen skills, namely intellectual skills through good critical thinking skills of citizens. One of the ways to implement critical thinking skills as citizens' intellectual skills in dealing with hoax in elections is a combination of critical thinking steps when an individual responds and analyze news on social media. These steps include reading the news thoroughly, observing all existing news, identifying news, tracking authors, tracing sources, analyzing logic, comparing news.

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